

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE CORPS CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS SCHOOL
WEAPONS TRAINING BATTALION
TRAINING COMMAND
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QUANTICO, VIRGINIA 22134-5043

STUDENT OUTLINE

CMO AND THE MEDIA

0531-CAS-106

CIVIL AFFAIRS NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER COURSE

M02AAPD

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

a. **TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE**. Given a mission and Commander's intent, coordinate with CA related capabilities, to facilitate integration of a variety of separate disciplines and functions pertaining to the civil dimension for the command. (CACT-EXEC-2010)

b. **ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

(1) Without the aid of references, identify public affairs capabilities organic to the MAGTF in accordance with MCWP 3-33.3 Ch 4. and Appendix B. (CACT-EXEC-2010f)

(2) Without the aid of references, identify releasable and non-releasable information in accordance with MCWP 3-33.3 Ch 3. and Appendix C. (CACT-EXEC-2010g)

(3) Given a scenario with related capabilities (PAO), a public statement, and a reporter, demonstrate the before, during and after best practices, in accordance with MCWP 3-33.3, Appendix C. (CACT-EXEC-2010d)

(4) Given a scenario with related capabilities (PAO), a public statement, and a reporter, participate in an interview, in accordance with the PE checklist. (CACT-EXEC-2010b)

1. **MEDIA.** Getting the word out accurately requires knowing who is asking and what kind of answer they want. Daily and weekly publications such as the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *U.S. News and World Report* do longer, in-depth pieces. So do many television (TV) magazine shows such as *20/20* and *60 Minutes*. Their deadlines are usually not as tight as those of radio and TV news shows, including cable, but they require detailed information, and their reporters tend to be more knowledgeable about the military. Radio (particularly all-news format stations) and the TV cable news organizations have an insatiable appetite and continual need for news updates. They need the facts, and they need them often. Radio is the easiest medium for interviews. It requires only audio recording that can be performed just about anywhere. Television is the most demanding because of the video aspect. Internet news outlets can post information almost instantaneously and have strict deadlines. In recent years social media (YouTube, Twitter, Facebook) has become increasingly problematic for the military. The Commandant of the Marine Corps has issued specific guidance to Marines to prevent social media posting from interfering with Public Affairs Operations.

a. **Engaging the Media.** In today's media environment, there is a high probability that individual Marines, regardless of rank, will answer media questions. At all levels, Marines must be media savvy. Leaders must recognize the importance of public opinion and its potential impact on the morale, confidence, and effectiveness of Marines as well as the political will of our nation. Leaders must also know the impact of the media on national, strategic, operational and tactical objectives.

Whether Marines speak to the media or not, the media will report a story. It is in our best interest to engage the media and convey a message that we craft rather than leaving it up to reporters to generate an image for the public. When dealing with reporters, always treat them with respect and professionalism. Never give them cause to view the military negatively.

b. **Military and the Media.** The working relationship between the Marine Corps and the news media is a professional one. We live in an age of exploding information technology, where live coverage of events is the norm and where an ever-increasing appetite for news and information challenges commanding officers and their staffs as never before. The news media's coverage of the Marine Corps and its missions must be permitted, supported, and planned for at all levels. We must be

prepared to meet, brief, transport, escort, and live with media personnel to provide an atmosphere for accurate and timely coverage. Individual Marines must represent the Marine Corps well to the public and must be prepared for opportunities to tell its story. To do this, Marines must understand the role of the media, what drives it, and the way it functions.

Military professionals and journalists often have different outlooks. This can sometimes lead to misunderstandings. What Marines need to keep in mind is that most journalists believe they are committed to being balanced in their coverage of events and good journalists always thoroughly investigate the issues. In the end however, commanders (along with the Public Affairs Officer), establish the ground rules for media operating within their ranks.

2. **PUBLIC AFFAIRS CAPABILITIES ORGANIC TO THE MAGTF.** There are two public affairs capabilities organic to the MAGTF. The first is the Public Affairs Officer; the second is Public Affairs Guidance.

a. **Public Affairs Officer (PAO).** The PAO is more than a mere collector and conduit of command information. PAOs are special staff officers trained to advise commanders on public affairs. Marine Corps PAOs know their profession. They know the news media, appreciate its distinct appetites, and understand that it is a dynamic, constantly evolving business. Most PAOs have attended the Defense Information School, many have majored in journalism or related studies in college, and some have advanced degrees in this career field.

b. **Public Affairs Guidance (PAG).** PAG is normally a packet of information or messages to support the public discussion of defense issues and operations. However, such guidance can range from a telephone response to a specific question to a more comprehensive package. It could contain an approved public affairs policy, news statements, and answers to anticipated news media questions. The PAG also addresses the method(s), timing, location, and other details governing the release of information to the public. At a minimum, the PAG should include

(1) **Classification.** Classification ensures that security is maintained. All PAGs should indicate a security classification.

(2) **Approach (active or passive).** An active approach involves efforts made to stimulate public or news media

interest, such as distributing press releases and inviting the news media to observe AV-8B Harriers. A passive approach is when no action is taken to generate news media and/or public interest in an issue or activity beyond answering specific inquiries.

(3) Public statement (Command Message). A public statement explains the issue, event, or exercise. The statement should be for public release in an active public affairs approach or for response to a query in a passive public affairs approach.

(4) Questions and answers. The PAG should contain a list of proposed and/or approved questions and answers to enable the user to respond to the majority of anticipated questions.

(5) Points of contact. The PAG should include the name of the originator of PAG and all points of contact (POCs).

3. **RELEASABLE AND NON-RELEASABLE INFORMATION**. Although the Marine Corps has a legal and moral responsibility to provide the public with as much unclassified information as possible, we have an equal responsibility to withhold classified information, thus protecting secrecy and surprise. This dual responsibility to release some information while withholding other information may require our public affairs practitioners to release information selectively.

When evaluating whether or not to proceed with an interview or media event, remember that the DoD principles of information are summarized as maximum disclosure-minimum delay. Maximum disclosure-minimum delay ensures continued credibility of the Marine Corps' Public Affairs Program. Released information must not violate operational security (OPSEC).

a. **Examples of releasable information include:**

(1) Equipment figures and approximate friendly force strength.

(2) Prisoner of war and friendly casualty figures by Service; approximate figures of enemy personnel detained during each action or operation.

(3) Allied participation by type (ground units, ships, aircraft), if appropriate.

(4) Names of installations and assigned units.

(5) Names and hometowns of U.S. military personnel.

b. **Examples of non-releasable information include:**

(1) Any information that reveals details of future plans, operations, or strikes, including postponed or canceled operations.

(2) Any rules of engagement (i.e. information on intelligence activities, including sources and methods, lists of targets, and battle damage assessments).

(3) Any identification of mission aircraft points of origin, other than as land or carrier-based.

(4) Special operations forces' unique methods, equipment, or tactics that, if disclosed, would cause serious harm to the ability of these forces to accomplish their mission.

4. **SELECT AN INTERVIEW LOCATION.** You must consider several factors when determining the best interview setting.

a. **Security considerations.**

b. **Physical location (sensitive or classified areas).**

c. **Type of interview.**

d. **Noise (heavy equipment nearby).**

e. **Special requirements or requests.**

5. **PERSONAL APPEARANCE.** Your initial appearance (haircut, shave, uniform, equipment) will not only make an impression on the reporter but also the target audience. They will form an immediate impression of you based on your appearance, tone of voice, and bearing.

6. **INTERVIEW BEST PRACTICES**

a. **Before**

(1) Know the medium you will be working with (television, radio, print) and the specific requirements of each.

- (2) Consult with the PAO.
- (3) Practice answering questions with the PAO.
- (4) Be aware of breaking news stories.
- (5) Rehearse the public statement from the PAG (command message).

b. **During**

- (1) Relax, be yourself.
- (2) Tell the truth.
- (3) Explain as much as possible.
- (4) Avoid military jargon.
- (5) Answer directly and give the bottom line up front (amplify later).
- (6) Correct the record- if the reporter makes an error or has incorrect information, correct them during the interview.
- (7) Listen carefully.
- (8) Maintain eye contact.
- (9) Be expressive and show interest.
- (10) Remember you are always on the record.
- (11) Be prepared to answer the five Ws and the H (who, what, when, where, why, and how).
- (12) Be modest but confident - you are the expert, but do not be condescending.
- (13) Do not lose your temper, even when provoked.
- (14) Do not fidget.
- (15) Do not look around the room for the answer (it gives the impression of discomfort, bluffing, or desperation).

(16) Do not speculate or comment on matters beyond your cognizance or responsibility.

(17) Restate the public statement (command message).

c. **After**

(1) Thank the reporter for the interview and the opportunity to communicate with their audience.

(2) Clarify any points that were unclear.

(3) Ensure all information is correct.

(4) Take a copy of the interview transcript to the PAO for critique.

REFERENCES:

JP 3-57 Civil-Military Operations

JP 3-08 Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination during Joint Operations, Vol I and II

JP 3-57.1 Joint Doctrine for Civil Affairs

MCWP 3-33.3 Marine Corps Public Affairs

MCWP 3-33.1 MAGTF Civil Military Operations

MCWP 3-40.4 MAGTF Information Operations

MCRP 5-12A Operational Terms and Graphics

MCRP 3-33.1A Civil Affairs Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

FM 101-5 Staff Organization and Operations

GTA 41-01-001 Civil Affairs Planning and Execution Guide

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